

REMARKS:

In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-64. Claims 1, 13, 30, 42, 48, 49, 52 and 64 are amended herein. No new matter is presented. Thus, claims 1-64 are pending and under consideration. The rejections are traversed below.

EXAMINER INTERVIEW:

Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for taking the time to conduct an Examiner Interview on July 13, 2006.

During the Interview, U.S. Patent No. 6,233,318 (Picard) and U.S. Patent No. 6,446,114 (Bulfer) were discussed. Specifically, Applicants pointed out that there is no motivation to combine Picard that explicitly states, "sorting, message selection or folder capabilities are preferably not provided through the voice interface..." (see, col. 6, lines 56-62) and Bulfer directed to merging all messages from different sources into a single mailbox.

Further, Applicants pointed out to the Examiner that even if Picard and Bulfer were combined, the combination thereof does not teach or suggest that messages are enabled to be interactively categorized and retrieved in response to a request by a recipient as taught by the invention. Independent claims 1, 13, 30, 42, 48, 49, 52 and 64 are hereby amended based on the Examiner Interview.

Applicants also respectfully request that the Examiner contact the undersigned if any of the features recited in the claims are unclear.

The outstanding rejections of the claims are addressed below.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103(a):

Claims 1-64 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Picard and Bulfer.

Picard is directed to a message storage system allowing different types of messages to be stored in a single unified multimedia mailbox and to be accessed via different pathways. Specifically, Picard is directed to providing a user with limited control over the messages using the voice interface (i.e., messages counts, indicating urgency of the messages) while providing additional control using a PC-based interface (see, col. 6 lines 48-52).

Bulfer explicitly states that all messages from a predefined list of messaging systems are merged into a single message repository, or mailbox (see, col. 1 lines 58-63). That is, Bulfer merges the messages from different sources and combines the messages into a single mailbox using an agent acting on a user's behalf and thus does not provide the user with any means of sorting the messages for review based on message characteristics.

The present invention provides multiple ways of sorting messages including enabling a recipient user to interactively sort and retrieve messages in accordance with the recipient user's preference. For example, messages of a recipient may be categorized in accordance with the recipient's preference "messages from Examiner received on Wednesday." That is, the recipient user is able to selectively retrieve desired messages, as opposed to simply being provided with messages based on a default message presentation order.

Independent claim 1, by way of example, recites that "... messages are enabled to be interactively **categorized** according to the at least two attributes into overlapping lists of messages by a recipient of the plurality of messages **and retrieved accordingly in response to a request by the recipient via said voice user interface**" (emphasis added). Independent claims 13, 48 and 52 recite similar features.

Independent claim 30 recites, "presenting the newly-arrived message to a user who is an intended recipient of the newly-arrived message before the user takes action to end the session" based on "a categorization previously specified by the intended recipient using said voice user interface." Independent claims 42 and 49 recite similar features.

Similarly, independent claim 64 recites that "an addressee of the messages [has] at least partial control over a sort order of the messages for retrieving the messages based on the sort order responsive to a request of the addressee using a telephone based voice user interface" and "providing the sorted messages to the addressee of the messages."

Bulfer simply merges messages and thereby loses source identity of the messages for sorting and Picard indicates preference for PC interface for sorting of messages.

Picard and Bulfer, alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest "categorizing and retrieving messages" based on "a request from the recipient of the messages" (claims 1, 13, 48, 52 and 64) and "a categorization previously specified by the recipient" (claims 30, 42 and 49) using the "voice user interface" (claims 1, 13, 30, 42, 48, 49 52 and 64).

It is therefore submitted that the independent claims are patentable over Picard and Bulfer.

For at least the above-mentioned reasons, claims depending from the independent claims are patentably distinguishable over Picard and Bulfer. The dependent claims are also independently patentable. For example, claim 26 recites, "wherein the system selects the list of messages for presentation in response to a user input" (see also claim 29). Picard and Bulfer do not teach or suggest these features of claims 26 and 29.

Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION:

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: 07/19/2006

By: Temnit Afework
Temnit Afework
Registration No. 58,202

1201 New York Avenue, NW, 7th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 434-1500
Facsimile: (202) 434-1501